



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE *February 23, 2011*

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Testimony Supporting House Bill No. 6385

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill No. 6385, *An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education*.

This bill is necessary to implement the Governor's Budget. It keeps whole most of the major education grants even in these challenging economic times. In this fiscal climate it is necessary to limit spending and this bill does this by capping various education grants at the FY 2011 level (Sections 1 through 9 of the bill cap Health Services for Pupils Private Schools, Non-Public Transportation, Adult Education, Public Transportation, Bilingual Education, Regional Education Services and Special Education).

The bill provides funding to the Regional Educational Service Center (RESC) Alliance to study ways to save districts money through regional transportation and a uniform school calendar. In anticipation of the results of the study, the Public Transportation grant is reduced by \$1 million in FY 2013.

Section 11 requires the Commissioner of Education in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services to develop a plan to integrate the child day care program formerly administered by the Department of Social Services with the school readiness program administered by the Department of Education. This is an important first step to align programs and break down the silos of state's early childhood education programs.

Section 12 and 13 of the bill revise the Open Choice statutes to provide additional, flexible funding (within available appropriations) to those districts that increase their participation in the program. This important addition will aid the state in reaching the goals outlined in the Sheff Agreement, as well as provide some additional funding to other districts across the state that increase their participation in the Open Choice program.

In this challenging economic climate, it is necessary to ensure that local and regional boards' of education budgets are not reduced to the detriment of Connecticut's students receiving a good education. Therefore, this bill would provide that the budgeted appropriation for education in FY 2012 and FY 2013, will be no less than it was in FY 2009.

This bill would phase in, over a four year period, the operation of the Connecticut Technical High Schools from being state-run to being operated by the district in which they are located or by the Regional Educational Service Center that serves the area. A grant would be established in order to fund the operation of such schools. It is anticipated that local administration of these schools would provide better integration and linkage to the local schools, which may provide better programming, enrollment plans and academics.

Finally, this bill repeals Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) legislation that was passed last legislative session in PA 10-76; that was administratively burdensome and unnecessary given that the Governor's budget currently includes a separate program for the CTHSS.

I would like to again thank the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony. I respectfully request the Committee support this bill and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.